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# Masterpiece Gardens attraction sold at auction

By TOM GERMOND  
News Chief Staff

LAKE WALES — All that is needed to draw a large crowd is a little monkey business.

Marty Higgenbotham, the auctioneer at Monday's sale of Masterpiece Gardens, said more than a thousand bidders and spectators came to the gardens Monday for the event.

"It was a very good-sized crowd," Higgenbotham said Tuesday. "We anticipated a crowd of 250."

But the sale of birds, bears and monkeys boosted attendance, he said.

The 12-by-25-foot reproduction of Leonardo da Vinci's painting "The Last Supper" was not sold, Higgenbotham said, because Masterpiece Gardens owner Ken Curtis thought he could receive more money for it than the high bid of \$200,000.

"He felt he it was worth more money," Higgenbotham said. "It's quite an unique piece of art."

A skyride sold for \$3,500, and a miniature train sold for \$19,000. All kinds of tools and equipment were bought, he said.

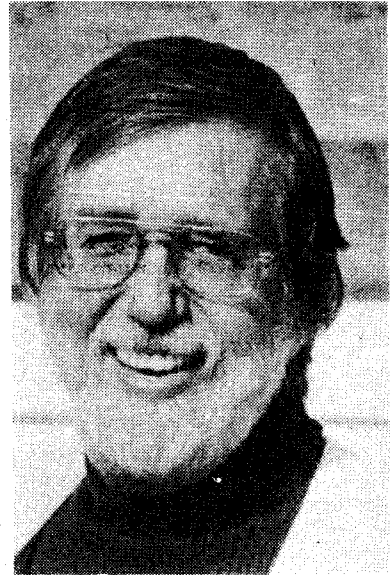
"Everything that was there, including the ticket counter," Higgenbotham said.

"I think we will put monkeys in every sale," he said.

The highest price paid for a squirrel monkey in a cage was \$275. Other monkeys in the gardens will be captured and sold for \$85 apiece.

Higgenbotham said the garden's black bear named Hazel and a cub were sold to two different buyers for \$300.

The total which bidders paid for the 135-acre gardens, including personal property,



News Chief file photo

Ken Curtis

was more than \$1.26 million, Higgenbotham said. One bidder paid \$250,000 for more than 20 acres.